

OLPC Proposal – Ghana, CUNY Baruch

Oliver Takacs, Derek Richardson, Cyril Dzomeku



x 100

In June 2009, our team will travel to Ghana to distribute 100 laptops as part of the One Laptop Per Child program. We hope to create a springboard for 6-12 year children to attain their aspirations through the invaluable resource that is education. Our project consists of a team of three college students dedicated to the cause of spreading education and inspiring empowerment in children of rural Ghana.

In collaboration with Children Rights International- Ghana (www.crighana.org), our deployment will revolve around being immersed in the environments of which the 6-12 year old children will grow up to shape. We believe that by teaching children to use these tools, we are empowering students to actively pursue their education independently and among their peers. It is our sole desire to imbue a thirst for learning and personal ambition in areas with limited access to the learning methods and tools that our team will provide.

During our deployment the students will be on their summer holiday. Our team will take advantage of the children's free time by announcing daytime sessions within the communities that our project operates in. After the students become acclimated with using the laptops, our hope is to have a session involving the parents of the children. This will not only give us a chance to show parents how to become actively involved in their child's learning experience, but also an opportunity for the children to demonstrate their newfound proficiency with the technology. We believe that by encouraging peer to peer learning within the community, the impact this technology has after our deployment is limited only by the students' desire for knowledge.

Our team consists of three students from New York City. The first of which is Oliver Takacs, a 28 year old BBA student from New York City's Baruch College (www.baruch.cuny.edu). Oliver studies Computer Information Systems and minors in International Economics and Mathematics. Oliver acquired his Associate Degree from Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) in Computer Science before continuing his studies at Baruch College. He graduated with honors and earned Academic Excellence in Computer Science Award upon graduating from BMCC. Oliver has lived in different countries and cultures. He has extensive server and networking skills, which will be crucial in fully utilizing the laptops in a community learning environment. His pedagogical skill includes working as a camp counselor with 8-14 year old children and tutoring fellow students in his college.

Our other team member is Derek Richardson, a 23 year old undergraduate student majoring in Journalism and French at the City University of New York. He is actively involved in his school's newspaper, and will use his experience to document our immersion into Ghanaian culture. Derek hopes to use his degree to work as a field journalist in sub-Saharan Africa and inspire an invested interest in the issues that face this diverse region of the world.

And last but not least we are glad to have Cyril Dzomeku, a United States naturalized native of Ghana, on the team. He was born in Tokyo, Japan. Currently he studies at Monroe College, New York City, majoring in Information Technology. He is a Certified Technician who interned with Orphan International refurbishing donated laptops to be given to orphans in Pakistan, Indonesia, and Tanzania. Cyril speaks local Ghana languages Ewe, Twi, and Ga, besides he has a good knowledge of the local geography and the culture of Ghana. Part of his family still lives in the country. Cyril enjoys teaching, computer technology, and believes his contribution can help the development of his homeland. Having him on the team adds a great deal on local knowledge and support for the team.

There is more information on us on our website we set up for the project:

www.walkingdowntheroad.com

We chose Ghana due to its vibrant culture and commitment to education. It is a stable democracy which makes the country a perfect destination for OLPC; it is a country where the positive effects of the distributed laptops will be efficiently multiplied. OLPC currently has a pilot program in Ghana, which would not only provide an administrative base for our deployment, but also support for the program after our departure. There is also strong governmental support for the program and for education in general in the nation, where 28 to 40 percent of its annual budget is spent on education. In consideration of the numerous NGOs and foundations already invested in the nation, including The BWL Foundation, we know that Ghana is an ideal deployment destination for our team. Our goal is to find the best rural location where we can bring about change. We are planning to use existing local networks that can provide the most support for a successful deployment and will reinforce the principles of One Laptop per Child.